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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 000795

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: MARCH 2 BAGHDAD SECURITY PLAN EXECUTIVE STEERING  
COMMITTEE

(U) Classified by Political Counselor Margaret Scobey,  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The March 2 meeting of the Baghdad Security  
Plan (BSP) Executive Steering Committee (ESC) focused on:

- A security update by General Abboud (para's 2-4);
- A report on the political committee's meetings aimed at  
enhancing political parties' support for BSP (5-6);
- Discussion of BSP and the upcoming neighbor's Conference  
in Baghdad (7-8);
- Services reports from DPM Zowbai and Electricity Minister  
al-Hasan (9-13);
- Popular mobilization committee emphasis on bringing to  
light complaints of abuses by security forces (14-16);
- General Odierno's briefing on MNF-I's activities and a  
commitment by General Lamb to look into allegations of abuse  
(17-18);
- The media committee's report and discussion of how to  
improve GOI contact with the media about BSP (19-21).

End Summary.

Security

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12. (C) General Abboud reported on security operations over  
the past week, including numbers of "terrorists" killed and  
detained, vehicle bombs (VBIEDs) dismantled, and weapons and  
other materials confiscated. He noted that BSP has at this  
point resulted in fewer detainees than in past Baghdad  
security efforts. Abboud claimed that internally displaced  
persons (IDPs) are returning to several Baghdad  
neighborhoods, some mosques and huseiniyas (Shiite houses of  
worship) are re-opening, some hospitals have re-opened.

13. (C) Abboud urged that Baghdad streets and houses be  
renumbered in order to help control neighborhoods, and that  
street barriers and checkpoints not placed by the GOI be  
removed. Abboud also called for increased security in  
production and storage of chlorine gas, in light of recent  
attempts to use chlorine in bombings. The ESC discussed  
possible media messages about chlorine gas, but the PM  
decided that this would be likely to cause panic. However,  
the PM backed Abboud's call for better security in production  
and storage.

14. (C) The PM asked Abboud why terrorists were allegedly  
still moving freely about some areas of Baghdad. Abboud  
cited what he said were still-insufficient Iraqi Security  
Force (ISF) numbers. The PM asked about using the ISF Quick  
Reaction Force (QRF) to help; Abboud pointed out the QRF is

not intended for normal "holding" operations.

#### Political Support Committee

15. (C) Walking stiffly due to injuries from a recent bombing, political support committee head VP Abdel Mehdi was present but left the ESC early. Political support committee member Hashim al-Hassani reported in Abdel Mehdi's stead. He reported that the committee met with Sunni Tawafuq bloc leader Adnan Dulaimi regarding allegations raised at the February 23 ESC that Dulaimi's personal security detail (PSD) fired on returning IDPs; Dulaimi had pledged to cooperate in the future.

16. (C) Al-Hassani also reported that he met with other Tawafuq members and cross-sectarian secular Iraqiyya party members, including Iraqiyya leader Ayad Allawi. Al-Hassani said he thought that the reconciliation aspect of BSP has been "forgotten" and said he would speak to Minister for National Dialogue Akram al-Hakim about how to re-energize it, including by accelerating de-Ba'athification reform.

#### BSP and the Neighbors Conference

17. (C) National Security Advisor Rubaie asked the political support committee to meet with foreign attendees at the March 10 neighbors conference in Baghdad, and explain BSP's goals. Rubaie emphasized that garnering awareness of and support for BSP is a main goal of the conference. VP Mehdi said he had done this during his recent trip to Turkey and would do so at the conference.

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18. (C) The PM noted that he had hoped the conference would be at the ministerial level, but that due to security concerns other countries would only agree to subministerial level. However, even so, he said the conference would be an achievement for the GOI, and give the GOI a chance to showcase its democratic government and constitution. The PM said the GOI would seek assurances about the conference agenda.

#### Services

19. (C) DPM Zowbai said he anticipated that a contract to purchase solar powered street lights would be complete within days. The services support committee is coordinating with General Abboud and organizing its engineers into teams for each of Baghdad's ten security areas; Abboud is naming officers as liaisons to the services committee. Garbage collection is now taking place during the evening as well as during daylight hours.

110. (C) Zowbai noted that the Ministry of Defense (MoD) had secured convoys carrying food rations. To answer complaints that food rations are not being distributed due to security problems, Zowbai suggested that ISF distribute food rations while conducting patrols.

111. (C) Zowbai highlighted the shortage of doctors due to migration abroad, and called for the GOI to create incentives for them to return to Iraq.

112. (C) Electricity Minister Karim Wasid al-Hasan confirmed the Ministry of Electricity (MoE) would soon finalize an agreement to purchase solar street lights. He told the ESC that MNF-I would begin to escort oil tankers from refineries to a Baghdad-area power station to assure the station had the necessary fuel. Delays at the refinery are due to checkpoints and curfews, and often mean that fuel trucks must stay overnight at the refinery.

¶13. (C) Zowbai urged that the GOI lower the price of heavy fuel oil (HFO) in order to increase demand and alleviate the glut of HFO at Iraqi refineries. The PM pointed out that security for HFO transport is also a brake on demand.

#### Popular Mobilization

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¶14. (C) Popular mobilization committee co-chair Nasir Alaa'ni told the ESC that his committee is working to raise public awareness of BSP and follow up on reports of abuses by ISF, with more emphasis on the latter. He said the committee has received hundreds of complaints, adding that the number had dropped recently.

¶15. (C) Co-chair Ahmed Chalabi explained that the committee investigated complaints and if they determined the complaint is justified, write a letter to ISF. He reported that in one case, militia members who had infiltrated ISF had distributed flyers telling residents of a district to leave. Chalabi claimed his committee had brought the matter to the attention of the local ISF commander, who dispatched ISF to the neighborhood to tell residents to ignore the flyers.

¶16. (C) Chalabi raised allegations of abuses by members of an ISF special forces unit, including what he claimed was an unjustified killing of a suspect's relative when special forces raided a home and did not find the suspect. The PM called for the investigation of the incident.

#### Generals Odierno and Lamb

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¶17. (C) General Odierno told the ESF he understood the frustrations with security. However, under General Abboud's leadership there has been gradual improvement. Security will continue to improve, but it will take months. The Coalition is continuing to flow forces into Baghdad, with particular attention to areas where VBIED attacks are occurring. MNF-I would continue to move into Baghdad neighborhoods, get to know the residents, and let the residents get to know them.

¶18. (C) General Lamb told the ESC MNF-I is conscious of complaints, but noted that special forces only engage in targeted operations based on specific information. He promised to follow up on the alleged unjustified killing.

#### Media Committee

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¶19. (C) Media committee co-chair Majeed reported on his committee's media events and statements over the past week.

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He raised the need to remove barriers and heavy weapons in front of buildings occupied by political parties. The PM questioned whether this was feasible, given terrorist threats.

¶20. (C) The ESC then debated efforts to work with satellite TV channels, including international channels that featured unfavorable coverage of BSP. Al-Hassani urged more GOI speakers appear on such channels, in order to have the GOI viewpoint reflected. Several ESC members called for more GOI leaders to appear in the media, in addition to official spokesman General Qassim.

¶21. (C) General Lamb pointed out that MNF-I has one spokesman but encourages local commanders to share their experiences with the media. MNF-I Strategic Effects Communications Chief Admiral Fox explained that MNF-I's media philosophy as "one message, many messengers" and offered his assistance to the media committee.

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